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Thursday, 22 February 2007, 06:46

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 TEL AVIV 000556

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TAGS PREL, KNPN, MNUC, PTER, IR, RU, IS

SUBJECT: IRAN-RUSSIA: UNDER SECRETARY JOSEPH'S DISCUSSIONS  
WITH ISRAELI GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS (CABLE 3 OF 4)

REF: A. TEL AVIV 00553

B. TEL AVIV 00554 C. TEL AVIV 00555

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones. Reasons: 1.4 (b)(d).

SUMMARY

1. (S) During his January 30 - February 2 visit to Israel, Under Secretary Robert Joseph participated in talks with Israeli representatives for the first time.
2. (S) The main points the Under Secretary's Israeli interlocutors made are as follows:
- A. Israel is very concerned about Russia's cooperation with Iran on the Bushehr reactor, and would like to see Russia withhold indefinitely its cooperation.
- B. Israel understands that Russia intends to transfer to Iran sophisticated ground-to-air defense systems.
- C. Israel is closely following U.S. efforts on the Global Nuclear Energy Policy (GNEP) and will support the initiative within the IAEA. Israel is also following U.S. efforts to develop a new international nuclear fuel cycle.
3. (S) Under Secretary Joseph provided an overview of his discussions with Russian MFA and ROSATOM officials in Moscow, noting that the U.S. is committed to a comprehensive approach to Iran's nuclear program.

BRIEFING ON MEETINGS IN MOSCOW

4. (S) On January 31, Under Secretary Joseph led a U.S. interagency team in nonproliferation talks with an Israeli interagency team at the MFA in Tel Aviv.
- A. He participated in the latest round of the U.S.-Russia Strategic Dialogue. It covered a lengthy agenda of issues, including bilateral issues, global nonproliferation, and the Middle East peace process.
- B. The two sides had discussed space policy, and the conventional Trident program. The Russians have opened up on their own space doctrine. They also discussed the U.S. space program.
- C. There was discussion about U.S.-Russian initiatives that are in train. The Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism is moving forward, and the U.S. is forward-leaning on the need to expand nuclear energy in industrialized and industrializing countries. Environmental reasons and the need for energy are key drivers.
- D. (S) DOE/NNSA Deputy Administrator Timbie added that ROSATOM Director Kiriienko said that if a country wants to be admitted to the Russian nuclear club, it must first be admitted to the U.S. nuclear club.

THE BUSHEHR REACTOR

5. (S) Discussion then shifted to Russia's assistance to the Bushehr reactor in Iran. Under Secretary Joseph and Assistant Secretary Rood made the following points:
- A. ROSATOM Chief Kiriienko said that there are a number of ways to prevent the transfer of Russian nuclear fuel to the Bushehr reactor. If Iran can demonstrate that it can handle the fuel safely, the U.S. will support its efforts.
- B. The Russians said that their cooperation on Bushehr is conditioned on the presence of IAEA safeguards inspectors. The U.S. will urge the IAEA to send inspectors to Iran.
- C. DFM Kislyak had worked to water down the effect of UNSCR 1737 sanctions. When the U.S. raised the matter of implementing financial sanctions on Iran, the Russians felt they have years, not months, to resolve the problem of Iran's nuclear program. They feel the Iranians have made less progress than they would like.
- D. The Russians did not raise U.S. sanctions on Russian entities for activities with Iran. DFM Kislyak seemed intent on focusing on areas of cooperation between the two countries.
- E. (S) DOE/NNSA Deputy Administrator Tobey said that the U.S. has drawn an indirect linkage between Iran and the 123 Agreement, and that fuel for the Bushehr reactor is being produced in Iran.
7. (U) Under Secretary Robert Joseph has cleared on this cable.

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